

## Claims

I claim:

1. A method of operating a distributed processing system, comprising:  
coupling a server system to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to  
distributed devices;  
identifying a plurality of the distributed devices to process project workloads;  
allowing at least one operating parameter for the plurality of distributed devices to be  
selected through the plurality of distributed devices; and  
utilizing information concerning the at least one operating parameter to schedule project  
workloads for the plurality of distributed devices.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the operating parameter comprises an affiliation  
indication.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the affiliation indication comprises a particular  
educational institution or a particular scientific research project.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the operating parameter comprises a project type  
indication.
5. The method of claim 4, wherein the project type indication comprises scientific research.
6. The method of claim 4, wherein the operating parameter further comprises a percentage  
indication that allocates processing capabilities of a distributed device between selected project  
types.
7. A distributed processing system having user selected operating parameters, comprising:  
a server system coupled to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to  
distributed devices; and

a database coupled to the servers systems, the database storing user selected operating parameters for a plurality of distributed devices, the user selected operating parameters being utilized to schedule project workloads for the plurality of distributed devices.

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8. The distributed processing system of claim 7, wherein the operating parameter comprises an affiliation indication.

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9. The distributed processing system of claim 7, wherein the operating parameter comprises a project type indication.

10. The distributed processing system of claim 7, wherein the operating parameter further comprises a percentage indication that allocates processing capabilities of a distributed device between selected project types.

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11. A method of operating a distributed processing system, comprising:  
providing a server system;  
coupling the server system to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to distributed devices;  
monitoring at least one idleness vector for a plurality of the distributed devices to determine a level of idleness for the distributed devices;  
identifying at least one of the distributed devices that is relatively idle; and  
utilizing the server system to schedule a distribution of workloads to the at least one idle distributed device based upon the idleness identification.

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12. The method of claim 11, wherein the idleness vector comprises elapsed time between activity on an input or output device for the distributed device.

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13. The method of claim 11, wherein the idleness vector comprises a change in a level of activity for a subsystem within the distributed device.

14. The method of claim 13, wherein the subsystem is a microprocessor.

15. The method of claim 11, the utilizing step comprises scheduling process intensive  
5 workloads to the idle distributed device.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the process intensive workloads comprise caching  
downstream transmissions for a network site broadcast.

10 17. A distributed processing system having idle system identification capabilities,  
comprising:

a first system coupled to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to  
distributed devices; and

a database coupled to the first system and storing idleness vector data for a plurality of  
15 the distributed devices, the first system utilizing the idleness vector data to  
identify relatively idle distributed devices and to schedule a distribution of  
workloads to the distributed devices based at least in part upon the idleness  
identification.

20 18. The distributed processing system of claim 17, wherein the idleness vector comprises  
elapsed time between activity on an input or output device for the distributed device.

19. The distributed processing system of claim 17, wherein the idleness vector comprises a  
change in a level of activity for a subsystem within the distributed device.

25 20. The distributed processing system of claim 17, process intensive workloads are scheduled  
to the idle distributed device based upon the idleness identification.

21. A method of operating a distributed processing system, comprising:  
providing a server system;  
coupling the server system to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to  
distributed devices;  
5 identifying capabilities for the distributed devices;  
aggregating capabilities from at least two distributed devices; and  
distributing a workload to the at least two distributed devices so that the distributed  
devices function together to process the workload.

10 22. The method of claim 21, wherein a storage device on a first distributed device is  
aggregated with a processing device on a second distributed device.

23. A distributed processing system, comprising:  
a first system coupled to a network, the network being configured to be coupled to  
distributed devices; and  
15 a database coupled to the first system and storing capability data for a plurality of the  
distributed devices, the first system utilizing the capability data to aggregate  
capabilities from at least two distributed devices.

20 24. The distributed processing system of claim 23, wherein a storage device on a first  
distributed device and a processing device on a second distributed device are aggregated  
capabilities.

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